



FEMA

Draft
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR CONSTRUCTION OF FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)
EMERGENCY GROUP HOUSING AT THE MARTIN SITE,
NEAR PINE GROVE, WETZEL COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
*FEMA-1558-DR-WV***

As a result of damages from severe storms from the remnants of Hurricane Ivan, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized to provide federal assistance to designated disaster areas in West Virginia. The Presidential disaster declaration occurred on September 20, 2004, and was officially designated as FEMA-1558-DR-WV. The declared disaster area comprises 20 counties in western West Virginia, the worst affected counties, are Marshall and Wetzel Counties. FEMA has determined there is an urgent need to provide group housing through FEMA's Individual Assistance Program for these counties. Accordingly, FEMA is proposing to build group housing sites as one of the options to help satisfy the demand for housing.

In order to implement its Individual Assistance Program in a timely and effective manner, FEMA has proposed an expedited process for assessing the potential environmental impacts of building emergency housing for displaced disaster victims. An Environmental Assessment (EA), dated November 23, 2004, was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10). The purpose of the EA is to analyze and document the proposed alternative's potential environmental impacts, serve as a vehicle to document compliance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

Because of flooding and landslides in Marshall and Wetzel Counties, many residents were evacuated to shelters. Thousands of requests for Individual Assistance have been received, including a significant proportion of requests for housing assistance. The substantial number of people displaced by the disaster, as evidenced by the growing number of applications for Individual Assistance, has created a critical need for housing. There are insufficient rental resources available to house displaced disaster victims and the use of hotel rooms, shelters, or staying with family/friends is only appropriate for a very limited time period. In response to this demand, FEMA is proposing to build emergency disaster group housing.

The proposed Martin group housing site will serve a displaced population in Wetzel County. Developing the site will include: placing about 6 mobile homes and associated pads, install utilities including water, sewer, electricity, and telephone. As outlined in the EA, regional topography and geology, among many other factors, limits the number of suitable group housing site alternatives available. This alternative and site is selected because of its proximity to displaced victims and feasibility for housing purposes.

FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the Winchester Emergency Group Housing site EA:

The above described action will not result in any significant adverse impacts to existing land use, water resources (surface water, ground water, Waters of the United States, wetlands, and floodplains), air quality, noise, biological resources (vegetation, fish and wildlife, State and federally listed threatened or endangered species and critical habitats), safety, involving hazardous materials and waste, cultural resources, or result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations. The proposed alternative has been reviewed and, to the best of our knowledge, does not have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x). The public comment period is from November 26 through November 29, 2004 with notice published in The Intelligencer Newspaper and on FEMA's web site at <http://www.fema.gov/ehp/docs.shtm>.

The following summarizes what is outlined in the EA's Mitigation Actions section and are the conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action alternative:

1. A WVDEP NPDES General Water Pollution Control Permit would require site design elements to manage the site's stormwater, thereby minimizing potential adverse affects to the stream from site stormwater runoff. An SWPPP would be prepared for the site, addressing its construction and occupancy phase. The SWPP would incorporate best management practices such as installing silt fencing and erosion control blankets between the staging area and stream.
2. Short-term adverse effects to on-site and nearby air quality from fugitive dust caused by site preparation (vegetation removal, burning, clearing and grading) can be reduced by periodically wetting the construction area. Any burning of vegetation would require coordination with the WVDEP, Air Quality Division.
3. Once construction is completed, planting ground cover in exposed areas along with native species landscaping would reduce potentially adverse long-term air quality conditions on-site.
4. Utility installation, including but not limited to water, sewer, electricity, and telephone must be coordinated with the appropriate service suppliers and regulatory agencies.
5. Safety fencing must be erected as a barrier between the proposed housing site and all natural hazards, including the stream and sediment basins proposed by the WVDEP.
6. Access to unsafe areas or heavy equipment during the construction would be restricted, and signage would warn of unsafe conditions.
7. If Route 20 must be temporarily closed to bring in the tractor-trailers, coordination with the West Virginia Department of Highways should be undertaken to determine if permits are required.
8. Proper construction vehicles and equipment storage and maintenance would reduce potential pollutant emissions and hazardous material spills (including fuels, coolants, and lubricants) and consequent soil and water contamination.

